

REMARKS

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claim 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Mitani et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,896,154); rejected claims 17 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Liu (U.S. Patent No. 6,315,832); and rejected claim 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Mitani et al. in view of Smith (U.S. Patent No. 5,020,244). Claim 19 was objected to as dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter, and respectfully traverse the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(b) and 103(a). However, in order to advance prosecution, Applicants have rewritten claim 19 in independent form to include all of the recitations of independent claim 17. Therefore, claim 19 is now allowable. Claims 17 and 18 have been deleted, without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof. The cancellation of claims 17 and 18 renders moot the rejections of claim 17 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(b) and 103(a).

In view of the above, the instant application is in condition for allowance with pending claim 19. Applicants respectfully request the timely allowance of the application.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge
any additional required fees to our deposit account no. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: June 23, 2006

By: 
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Ltd. Rec. No.: L0222